A PLEA FOR THE OLD CHURCH

OR

The Reformed Presbyterian Among the Churches.

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ILLUSTRATED BY

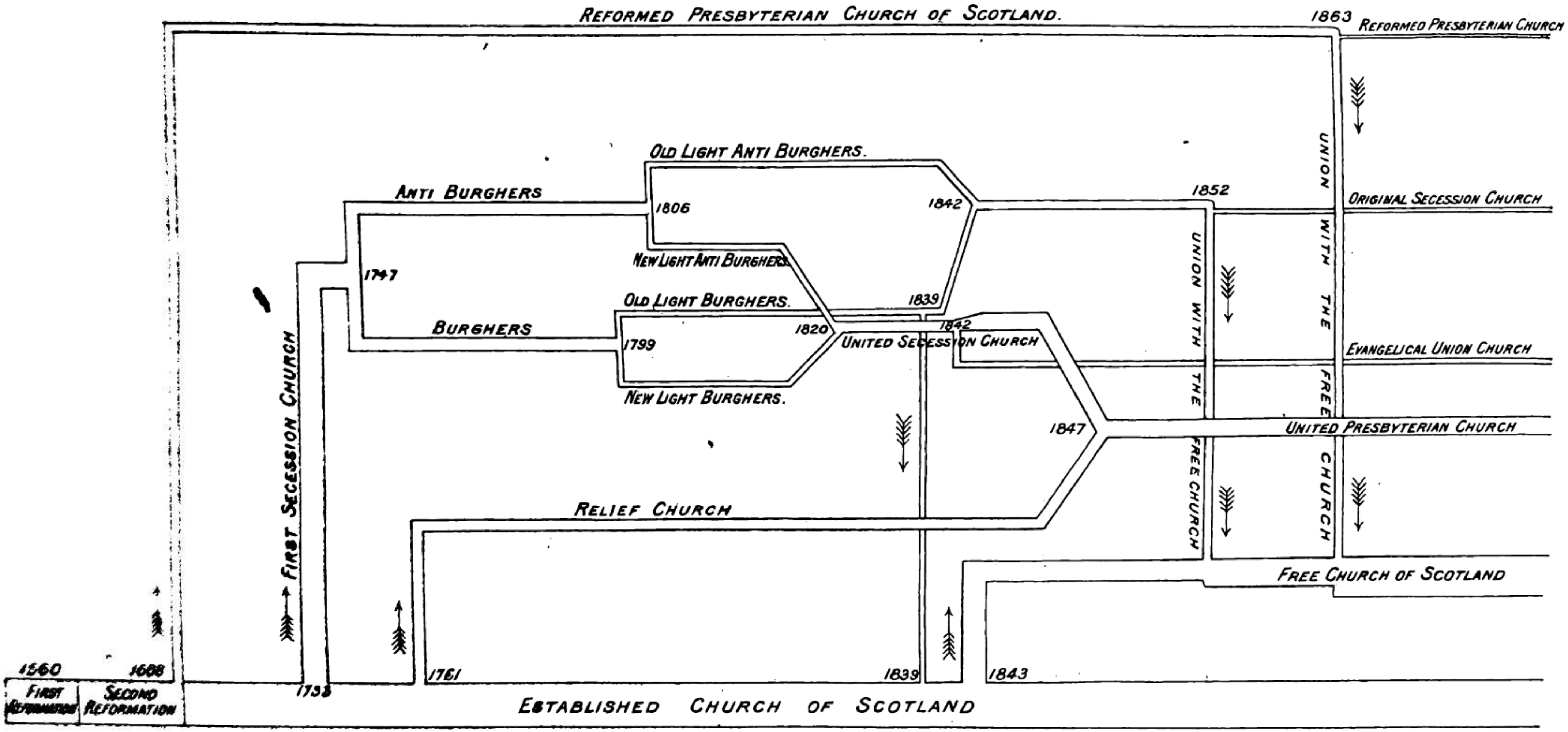
"SMYRNA" AND "PHILADELPHIA"
IN THE "SEVEN EPISTLES."

BY THE

REV. F. M. FOSTER,

Pastor of the Third Reformed Presbyterian Church,

NEW YORK.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UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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RELIEF CHURCH
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ESTABLISHED CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

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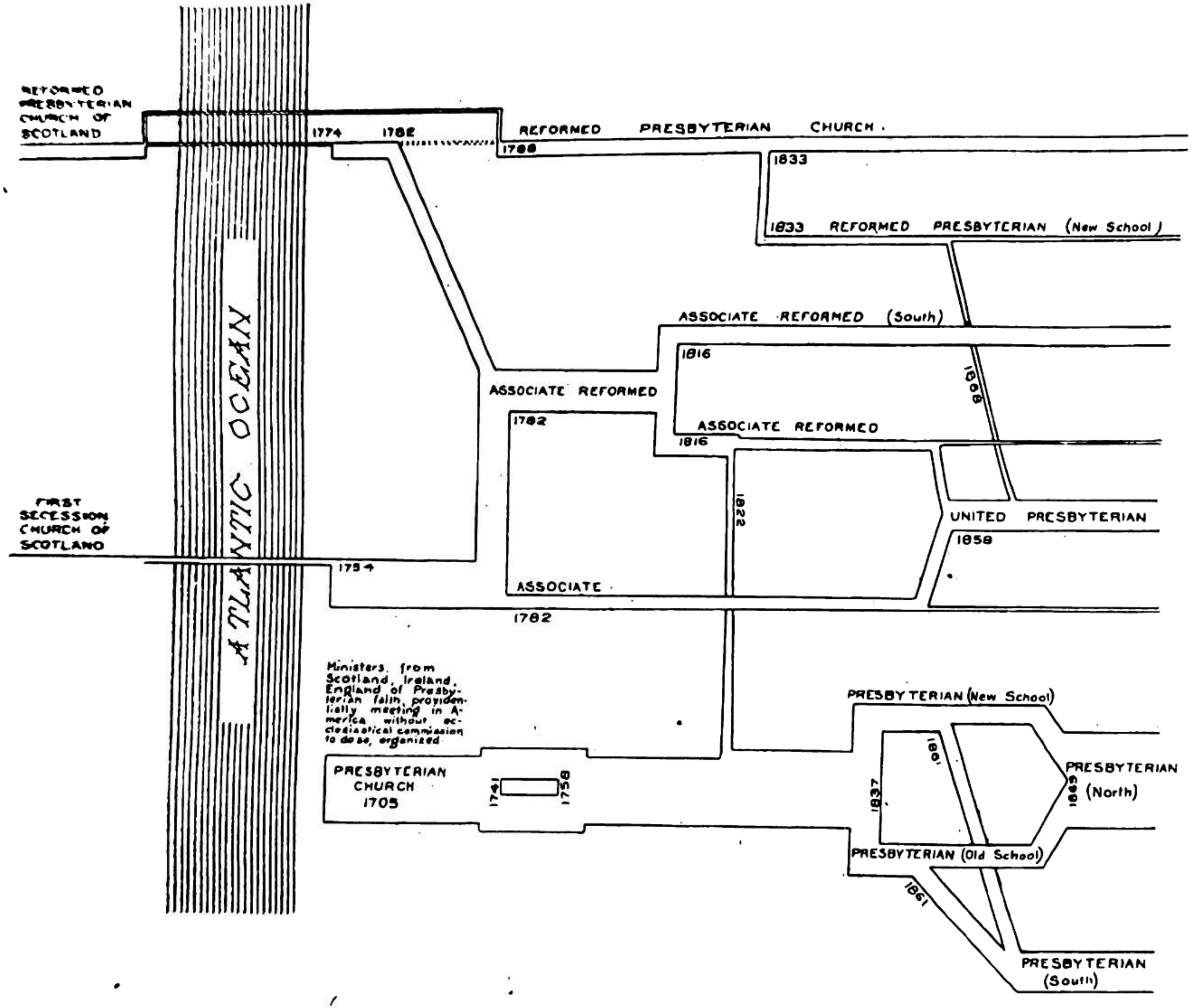
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PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1705
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PRESBYTERIAN (New School)
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PRESBYTERIAN 1869 (North)
PRESBYTERIAN (Old School)
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PRESBYTERIAN (South)

By F. M. FOSTER
Pastor THIRD REF. PRES. Church, NEW YORK

THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

The Reformed Presbyterian can justly claim to be the oldest, hence, the parent stock, of the Presbyterian family of Churches. She is entitled to the name "Presbyterian," without the added "Reformed."

The Reformed Presbyterian Church *has* had a mission and has done a work. This no intelligent student of Church history can deny. She came into view at the opening of the Reformation period. She was the centre of those mighty religious upheavals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. If you ask a definition of her mission and work *then*, you are pointed to a mighty reformation accomplished, and to such immortal principles as these forevermore established: Liberty to purchase, possess and read the Bible; Liberty to worship God according to His word; The Headship of Christ over His church and her independent jurisdiction; Christ the King of nations, and ruler and subject alike under His law. These principles, with their corresponding liberty, were secured after the most desperate struggle, which at no time was doubtful, because truth is omnipotent, but which for scores of years was angry, bitter, merciless.

The Church, what is now known as the Reformed Presbyterian, was the very centre of this conflict, this religious revolution. She "endured as seeing Him who is invisible." She was the instrument under God of giving to the world a heritage of principles, wrought into the lives and hearts of men, of which their children may be justly proud. With such results, with blessings flowing down to succeeding generations and spreading over the world, will any question the mission and work of the Reformed Presbyterian Church *at that time?* All those who are in the Covenanter communion and all those who have gone out of it, are a unit in approbation. She stands in history with the marks of the very church of God upon her, indelibly stamped in the white heat of the furnace. She rests upon a solid, righteous basis, which no sister Church, born after the battle was won and the conflict over, can question.

But has the Reformed Presbyterian Church a mission of God and a work to perform *to-day?* Some people outlive their usefulness. Has she? A number with poor backsight, poorer foresight, and little divine sight, say: She has, and should cease to exist. Others wish the Church to live, but they ask and receive a divorce and marry another. Others, though remaining, lose *denominational enthusiasm*, magnify the work of sister Churches, and depreciate their own. Others see things from a Bible point of view, and hold and maintain that the Reformed Presbyterian, so honored of God in the Reformation, is

His Church in the highest sense; that if any denomination exists of right, she does; that if any Church can be challenged as schismatic it is not the Reformed Presbyterian; and that she has a mission and work not yet accomplished.

Before entering upon specifications, let every loyal Covenanter be encouraged, and every disloyal one be made to consider, by these indisputable facts, First: There is a greater number of God-fearing people who keep the commandments, in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, in proportion to membership, than in any other. Second: The ordinance of the Lord's Supper is observed by a larger per cent. Third: The attendance upon public worship and the prayer meeting is far above the average in other Churches. Fourth: The observance of family worship, nearly obsolete in families of other Churches, is far more regular. Fifth: The amount of mission work carried on in proportion to membership, is in advance of any sister denomination, the Moravians excepted. Sixth: The rate of "giving" is higher. Seventh: The children are more conscientiously trained in the Scriptures, the Psalms, the Catechisms and Church standards.

But it is urged against the body, First: She is little among the thousands of Israel—so was "Bethlehem Ephratah;" Second: She insists upon *all divine truth and the embodiment of it in the life*. For these, people of narrow view openly criticise, assault her profession, and leave her communion. It is important, therefore, in the present period of the Church's history to keep her doctrinal broadness and soundness in the faith distinctly in view, and the blessing of God upon the ordinances as administered by her in the development of pious, Christian lives.

The place which the Reformed Presbyterian Church scripturally holds among the denominations is, and will be, a matter of intense interest. The many creeds witness to great diversity of belief. Many must of necessity be in error. But God has left no place in the curriculum of doctrine for error. Nor is it a matter of slight importance to teach error as *truth*, and truth as *error*. This, the denominations which hold error, do. They, thus far, witness against God, and wrong souls for time and for eternity. If there ever was a time when the question "What is truth?" and, "What denomination holds it in full?" pressed for answer, this is that time. To set forth what is believed to be the true place which the Reformed Presbyterian Church holds among the denominations, and thus her relation to truth, is the purpose of these pages. To assist, the Epistles "to the Seven Churches which are in Asia" shall be used by way of illustration.

Some may disagree, but it is intended to regard the "Seven Churches" as denominations, believing that God practically viewed them as such. They were situated in triangular piece of territory, whose long side would be about one hundred and fifty miles. They were not neighbors, as neighborhood would be understood in days of printing, steam and electricity; but they were sufficiently near each the other to awaken concern. God's approval of two, His rebuke and censure of the other five, would raise questions of "doctrinal soundness," "communion," "church union," "separation," etc., etc. Those which would be pure were forced to consider: What shall be their relation to those which merit such condemnation and rebuke? It would appear that the questions which concern the "divided church" to-day, were pressing for solution eighteen hundred years ago.

Preliminary to more particular discussion, let it be observed

GOD LOVES HIS CHURCH, THOUGH DIVIDED.

If this be not true, the most distressing state of affairs exists. At no time since the Reformation, at no time since the beginning of the Christian era, was the church of God so divided as at this present. The eleventh census reports one hundred and forty-three denominations in the United States. Each has its own officers, organization and title. Some are closely related; some widely separated. Some have the same historical source; others, slightly varied forms of belief. Some have distinct forms of government; others combine various forms. They group themselves into families. The Adventists are split into six separate and distinct denominations. The Baptists, into thirteen. The Lutherans, into sixteen, besides independent congregations. The Methodists, into seventeen. The Presbyterians, into twelve. Thus through the list. Nor is the tendency toward unity—though much is written, but to greater diversity in belief and practice. The number of denominations will probably increase.

Does God, therefore, love a divided church?

HE DOES. Unsightly as she may appear, contentious, ignorant, and corrupt, as is evidenced by these divisions, she is nevertheless "the church which He purchased with His own blood." His interest, love and devotion have never waned. Not the less sinful are divisions; but His loving arms are stretched out still. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love."

But is there proof, the inquirer asks, of God's love for a divided church? Probably each Christian feels, though it cannot be true in fact, that *he* is in the purest Church. But he is not sure of others. He sees this body holding this error; that one practicing that sin, and he doubts. Let such inquirer turn to the Introduction to the Epistles to the seven churches. He reads, "John to the seven churches which are in Asia; grace be unto you, and peace from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before His throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth." Could salutation be more loving? Could it express deeper interest? It comes direct from Christ, and is a message of grace, love and peace.

But the Epistles to the Seven Churches disclose serious errors against which there is the sternest rebuke, and practices which brought down condemnation, and upon each according to its deserts. To Ephesus, "* * * thou art fallen," "repent," "do the first works," "or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick." To Pergamos, "Thou hast there them which hold the doctrine of

Balaam * * * also them which hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate." To Thyatira, "Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed unto idols;" and thus through the list, with two exceptions—Smyrna and Philadelphia. It is not necessary, just here, to consider the measure of demerit. It is sufficient to note the grievous errors and wrongs and sins against God. The work of grace was hindered. The enemy poured in through gaps left open. So serious were these sins, so withering to spiritual life, that God says of Sardis, "Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead." Yet these were Churches in union with Christ as the Head, which He recognized as His, which He loved, and to which He sent gracious salutations.

God's view of these Churches, so widely differing each from the other, and some of them far from the truth, is believed to be His view of the Churches now, differing as they do each from the other, and far as many of them are from the truth. If the church's Head should send epistles to the various denominations, doubtless many of them would be no less severe than those sent eighteen hundred years ago through the Apostle John. Possibly some in the list would be rejected, as without genuine religion and wholly corrupt; but doubtless nearly all would receive a message, each according to its internal state, of rebuke, warning and encouragement. *Conditions then and now make this conclusion mandatory.*

GOD DOES LOVE HIS CHURCH, THOUGH DIVIDED.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit; the evidence of His presence in work done, in souls comforted and built up; the spirit of missions, which stays not; the hopes and anticipations of glory awakened; these, seen in every evangelical denomination, show the attachment of the Redeemer to His church, the attachment of the church to her Redeemer.

To the much divided and erring church of to-day the Lord, it is believed, sends the same gracious salutations as to the Seven Churches which were in Asia, "Grace unto you, and peace from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before the throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth."

There are gradations in love. There are those who are more worthy of confidence. Some are prepared to be assigned a severer, hence a more honorable, service. The student of the Seven Epistles discovers that some of these Churches are more worthy of love, and that the letters to some display more fully tokens of divine affection. There is a vast difference between the startling words to Laodicea, "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth," and the loving words to Philadelphia, "I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." God loves His church, and each branch of it. But He loves the purer more. He loves the purest *most.* This the Bible student must admit. When the church was so corrupt that, in chastisement, Judah must be carried to Babylon, she was not in condition to receive or to appreciate the wealth of God's love as in the time of David. There were patches of bare ground which could receive the warmth of His sunshine, but the ground in general was covered with snow and cold. Yet there was life, and which, under painful experiences, quickened, until the church longed to return to Mount Zion :

> "By Babel's streams we sat and wept,
> For memory still to Zion clung."

It is held, believed and maintained that, among the denominations to-day, those which are *purest in doctrine* and *holiest in life* are fitted to receive, and do receive, a higher degree of the love of God. If it can be demonstrated that some one denomination holds truth in advance of all others, and is correspondingly pure in life and consecrated in work, the conclusion cannot be resisted that that Church receives, because fitted to receive, a larger place in the affections of her Lord.

CHURCH STANDARDS.

It is believed that the Church which is capable of receiving the love of God in its fullness is the Church whose standards are "agreeable unto, and founded upon, the Word of God." It is furthermore believed that, as Church Standards are written and published, the inquirer can find, and it is his duty to find, the Church which is thus pure. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world." But suffer a preliminary word on creeds.

It is probable that creeds are as old as the church. Before the written Scriptures, the antideluvians and the patriarchs had views of the atonement set forth in their sacrifices. The offering must be interpreted. In later times, the Passover must be interpreted. God commanded its interpretation for the benefit of the children. (Ex. 12: 26, 27.) The interpretation of the sacrifice and the interpretation of the Passover is the creed. Samuel, training young men in the school of the prophets, must have taught them some system of belief, that they in turn might go through all Israel teaching the same truths. Nehemiah caused Ezra, the Priest, and the Levites to read the Law in the hearing of the people, while the great congregation stood. But they did more: "And they read the book, in the law of God, distinctly; and they gave the sense, so that they understood the reading." Giving "the sense" would be, to all purposes, a creed. While, therefore, the document cannot be produced, yet the student is justified in believing that there were statements of doctrine, of duties, of obligations, in Old Testament times.

That creeds have been the uninterrupted history of the New Testament church is admitted.

Some say, creeds perpetuate denominationalism. They do. But they do more, they herald the truth in opposition to error. They hold up truth as a standard, around which its followers may rally. To destroy creeds would not harm error. It would be like putting back into ore the swords and guns and cannon, while the enemy is devastating the country. *If creeds be right, there is no stopping place in creed development until you have the fullest exhibition of truth as it is in Jesus. If creeds be wrong, statements of doctrine, however short, must be rejected, and the ministry must cease deducing doctrines from the Word of God.*

Let the reader take up the "Epistles to the seven churches which are in Asia." A careful analysis will exhibit, inferentially, the principles of the church's creed as above set forth. Presumably the "Seven" started with the same creed. But five of them soon rejected portions of it. They began to degenerate. Errors came in and received shelter. So seriously was the creed mutilated that the Head of the Church sent to Ephesus this startling message: "Thou art fallen," "repent." "Do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of his place." The degeneration of Pergamos was even more startling: "Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam;" "thou hast also them which hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate." Worse still did he charge upon Thyatira: "Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols." In Sardis and Laodicea the declension is still greater and more destructive, and is met by Christ with more startling rebuke.

In these cases, the ruinous effects of repudiation of doctrine are seen. The Churches became corrupt. Heresy sat in the teacher's seat. Sanctification was hindered, if not stopped. Souls were turned away from the Lamb of God, the door of hope. The reason for Christ's warning is therefore understood. Souls were being destroyed and His work ruined.

In the midst of this crucifixion of doctrine, and the exaltation of error, two of the Seven Churches stood by the truth—Smyrna and Philadelphia. "They kept the faith." They resisted error and refused to give it place. They exacted a confession, and disciplined the heretical. In no other way could they maintain their purity, and their Lord's approbation. Sin, and unbelief, and heterodoxy surged up against them as fiercely, if with not more tremendous power and wicked determination, than against the five. But they stood as the rock in the surging billows. In so doing, *they did right.*

Is there, in the matter of Church Standards, a "Philadelphia" Church to-day? Is there one which approximates it? Is there one which has lifted up the standard of truth against every error which has lifted up its head? Is there one which has unflinchingly, in spite of protests and reproaches of severity, steadfastly maintained the "Philadelphia" standard of doctrine and Church purity, while others have "fallen?" Yes, and that Church is the

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She will meet any denomination of Christians and lay her Church Standards alongside of theirs, and prove to a demonstration that her's are broader, fuller, deeper, higher; that they cover all truth thus far developed by the Holy Ghost. The denominations range themselves backward along the line of error, and practice and preach it, from the least to the most heterodox and dangerous degree. The Lutheran in consubstantiation. The Baptist in immersion. The Methodist in free will. The Presbyterian in human composition in worship. The United Presbyterian, with all the others, in exalting the will of the people as supreme. Thus through the list; and all through it, worship is corrupted by human invention. God is robbed of His meed of praise. His truth which "makes men free," is not confessed. Error receives shelter while it hinders, and not infrequently, ruins, souls. In the midst of these corruptions, this wrong to God and injury to men, the Reformed Presbyterian Church stands fast, holding forth the full curriculum of doctrine and duty. She trusts in God and in His invincible, His indestructible truth.

Looking at denominations, laying their Confessions alongside each the other, and all alongside of the Word of God, the conclusion cannot be resisted that the Declaration and Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church is nearer the divine standard, thus making her the "Philadelphia" among the Churches.

PROFESSION OF FAITH.

Let the last eighteen hundred years be dropped from view. Look at that stranger as he lands on the South shore, Asia Minor. He has been under-going conviction. His heart is touched by the Holy Spirit, through the operation of the truth. He wishes to find a church-home. He learns that North and West there are Seven Churches. Each has its distinct organization. Each has its "angel"—a minister. Each is pushing work in lines compatible with itself.

There is put into the hands of this stranger the "Epistles to the Seven Churches." He reads and with cumulative interest, for these disclose God's view. With astonishment, he reads these words to the Church of Ephesus: "Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen; and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

Predisposed as the stranger was to Ephesus, this startles him. The warning that "the candlestick" may be "removed," awakens the belief that he cannot trust his eternal interests in that Church.

He turns to the Letter to Pergamos, and reads: "Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." The stranger's anxiety is increased. Shall he unite with Pergamos, when its internal state is such that the Head of the church will, except they repent, "fight against them with the sword of his mouth?" Shall he willingly *pass under their censure* and put himself in the way of their judgments? If God so testifies against them, is it not his duty to decline their fellowship as "walking disorderly?" If there is a Church without divine censure, is it right for him to unite with one which is under it? To make sure of duty, he opens the Word to Romans 16:17: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."

He turns to Laodicea, and reads in the Epistle to that Church: "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

To Sardis: "Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead."

To Thyatira: "Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols."

To Laodicea: "Because thou art neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

The stranger is grieved. Here are five Churches and each one is under censure and rebuke. Not one of the five is up to, but far below, the scriptural standard. The judgments of God are about to break forth. He MUST find a Church which approximates the scriptural standard and purity, and which receives God's approbation.

Once more he takes up the Seven Epistles and turns to the Letter to the Church of Philadelphia. With misgivings, he begins to read: "I know thy works: Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

At last, the searcher has found the Church which is approved of God. The Philadelphia is up to the scriptural pattern. It is without "rebuke." It has the fullness of divine love. Blessed Philadelphia! Sweetly resting in the arms of the Redeemer! The heart of the stranger swells in thanksgiving. "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion!"

Encouraged, he turns to the Letter to Smyrna, and finds that Church is, also, without rebuke or censure, and to it is made precious promises. These two are approved of God; while the five distribute themselves backward along the line of heterodoxy, corruption and sin, and are censured, rebuked, and warned. The stranger's duty is plain. He cannot dishonor his Lord and harm, if not destroy, his own soul, by uniting with Ephesus, or Pergamos, or Thyatira, or Sardis, or Laodicea. But he can unite with Smyrna or Philadelphia and glorify His Saviour, and be blessed in His grace.

The hypothesis upon which the argument proceeds is, these Seven Churches approximate denominations to-day. The stranger may, therefore, represent the inquirer seeking a church-home. Confronted by one hundred and forty-three denominations, as in the

United States, each claiming that it is nearest the truth and freest from censure, his task is difficult. But eternal interests are in the balance. He must grapple with the problem. "Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein." The doctrine, the ordinances, the worship and the worshipers are to be measured by the divine "reed," the Word of God. This is the commandment.

In these days of latitudinarian views, it is quite out of fashion to critically judge Church creeds. Also, to require examination of a creed and acceptance of it, has, excepting in a few of the more orthodox, passed out of date. As a result, the candidate to-day is as likely to connect with Ephesus, if that be a popular Church, as with Philadelphia or Smyrna. But it is none the less the inquirer's duty to seek out the Philadelphia Church, or its sister in blessing, the Church of Smyrna. The notion that you can be in any denomination and do your duty to God, to man, to truth, to your own soul, equally well, is rejected. The whole tenor and spirit of the "Seven Epistles" is against it.

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Just here it is affirmed, with some degree of confidence, that the Reformed Presbyterian Church more nearly approximates the Philadelphia, than does any of her sister denominations. It is not claimed that she is fully up to that standard; that she has so unreserved approbation of the Church's Head; that He has no censure or rebuke; but this, SHE IS NEARER HIS TRUTH IN DOCTRINE, ORDINANCE, WORSHIP, GOVERNMENT AND PIETY. Not one Church, but the Reformed Presbyterian, witnesses in confession and conduct for Christ's Mediatorial authority and dominion; and this intimately concerns His Kingly Office as it does the glory of His Name.

In worship, what Church, but the Reformed Presbyterian, approximates the Philadelphia? What Church has not corrupted the worship but this? The Lord's Songs are set aside for man's, as if the human were superior to the divine, and man had the privilege of invading the holy place and of placing the blemished—and what human composition is not blemished—upon the Lord's altar. The Dispensation of the Holy Spirit is marred and the God of the New Covenant dishonored, by thrusting in instrumental music, a part of the temple service of the Old. This has come to be an evil, justly alarming. "Praise Services"—so-called—are, not infrequently, the blowing of horns, playing pianos and violins, and pieces from a brass band, etc., etc. And this in our day passes for *worship!* "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph." God be praised, there is still left one Church, little though she be among the thousands of Israel, which "has escaped alone to tell" the world, and exhibit in her ordinances, the pure worship of God as in Apostolic and Reformation times. *It is the inquirer's duty to find this Church.* This will make him a witness for God, an influence to lift men up into the light and peace of perfect divine approbation.

Perhaps on no line is the Church of God going more rapidly astray than in the matter of Confession of Christ's name. In the Episcopal, it is but less than a form. In the Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, it has been narrowed to about this: "Do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?" *What* is believed concerning Christ is not, it seems, a matter of concern. The candidate's conception of the system of grace is not examined into. Nor is there examination into the life. Nor is there a covenant with God as to future conduct. The internal state of Sardis, of Laodicea, of Thyatira, of Pergamos, of Ephesus, is seen in many Churches now. The world has, therefore, reason to thank God that, in the midst of decline in profession, when it is narrowed to mean so little, when error of every description finds shelter, if not a congenial home, He has one Church that maintains the high standard of sound doctrine.

All the reasons which made Philadelphia steadfast in her profession appeal to the Reformed Presbyterian Church to-day. Ephesus denominations say, "*Don't be so stiff!*" and Thyatira, "*You are narrow and bigoted! Why don't you broaden a little and gather in a greater number!*" And Sardis, with a name that she lives and is dead, with arrogant air answers: "*Philadelphia will not even receive one of our members without putting him through an examination!*" But these things do not move Philadelphia as she rests sweetly in divine approbation. She is conscious that she is maintaining the highest interests of souls and is giving the highest glory to the Redeemer's Name. The Covenanter Church to-day maintains this high profession and refuses admission to those who hold error, come from what denomination they may, unless they repent. The inquirer should connect, not with Ephesus, not with Pergamos, not with Thyatira, not with Sardis, not with Laodicea ; but with Philadelphia—which Church is approximated to-day in the Reformed Presbyterian.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

"The Seven Churches which are in Asia" afford examples of relaxed discipline with disastrous results. Before these are noted, suffer a few observations as to the condition of the Churches.

First: Probably discipline was never more lax since the Reformation.

Second: The disastrous effects are calculated to fill with alarm.

Third: The tendency is to greater relaxation.

With Church Standards nominally high, yet practically low, there has developed a spirit of liberality of serious importance. By some, this is supposed to argue a broad, unselfish, liberal mind, which refuses to pass judgment upon the acts of others. By some, it is believed to be right to retain evil-doers in the church that you may do them good – at least, keep them from doing worse. By some, it is believed that, to exercise discipline, you would hinder growth. By some, it is argued that offenders injure themselves only. By some, it is contended that there never has been a pure church, and to try to have one is useless. Thus the evil has spread until conditions border on ecclesiastical lawlessness.

If a church, careless of what her members believe, indifferent to what her members do, each doing what is right in his own eyes, is the longed-for Canaan, that land is now surely possessed. If these be conditions which call for anxiety, then should the church bestir herself lest she be turned back forty years into the wilderness.

In turning to the "Seven Churches which are in Asia," the reader will recognize in some of them an alarming indifference to the presence of error. In some, error was preached as well as practiced. "Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen; and repent, and do the first works," is a message to Ephesus which points to the rejection of truth and to worldly lives. Pergamos was charged with having "there"—in her communion—people who were openly idolaters. The indictment against Thyatira was that she retained in her communion *teachers of idolatry*, which was still more destructive. Sardis had sunk so low, had so opened all worldly gates, that the Lord said, "Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead." Laodicea, rich in wealth, and pompous accordingly, was in the same spiritual state—"I will spue thee out of my mouth."

Against Philadelphia and Smyrna God brings no accusation. *Were they pure because of no opportunity?* Did none apply for membership in them but the pure in doctrine, in heart, in life? Did none in their communion transgress and reject the standards of the Church? It is believed that all the evils which so seriously affected the five sought entrance into the two, BUT WERE SUCCESSFULLY RESISTED BY THE EXERCISE OF DISCIPLINE! Smyrna and

Philadelphia must have suffered much. To maintain a high standard in the midst of declension among sister Churches; to require purity of life and separation from the world; to insist upon the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, in profession and in practice; to hold steadily on these lines of fidelity to God and the interests of souls while swept on all sides by worldliness and batteries of sin, must have tested, possibly as never before, and similarly not many times since, these two congregations. But they stood the test. "Hold fast that which thou hast that no man take thy crown." As an example of devotion to God, to truth, to the interests of a lost world, but few are recorded more Christ-like, and, hence, truly heroic. No wonder He said to Smyrna, "I know thy works and tribulation and poverty. * * * Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days; be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." It is an honor to suffer for Christ, and the faithful Church suffers. And unto Philadelphia He said, "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." The world should know God's love for this faithful Church.

It is believed that Smyrna and Philadelphia maintained this high standard, and thereby secured the Lord's approbation, *through the exercise of discipline.* In the series of years, through change of location and various causes, some would be moving from Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis and Laodicea into the bounds of Smyrna or Philadelphia. Clement, of Thyatira, moves to Philadelphia. What shall the latter Church do? Thyatira is a corrupt Church. Shall Clement be admitted *without examinatiom?* If so, he may carry the heterodoxy of Thyatira into Philadelphia, whereupon Philadelphia would lose her full divine approbation. She would be admitting into her communion, unchallenged, hence with tacit approval, error, which, prolific as error is, would soon spread over that fair and beautiful garden of God. It is reasonable to suppose that Philadelphia would not admit Clement until satisfied by examination of his soundness in the faith. No shallow sentimentalism of brotherly love would be sufficient to set aside this course of procedure.

Furthermore, if the corruptions in doctrine and sins in practice into which the five had fallen should manifest themselves in Philadelphia, her purity, as well as her continued divine approbation, require immediate ecclesiastical action. *Discipline must be exercised.* It is but fair to assume that the high standard was maintained by *increasing watchfulness; by earnest, faithful presentation of the truth*, and by *visiting the incorrigible with censure.* Errors which had wrought such havoc in the five must have often showed themselves in the two. But by the grace of God, exceeding watchfulness in teaching, and the exercise of discipline, they were destroyed.

It is probable that some who would claim to be dissatisfied with such rigidity—better, "faithfulness"—would betake themselves away. They would find a genial home in any of the five. Such, however, are no loss, when it is remembered at what price they would be retained. It is no dishonor to the two to lose them. It is no honor to the five, but adds to their burdens, to get them. Increased rolls may witness to increased heterodoxy.

CLOTHED WITH AUTHORITY.

It is believed that Christ has clothed His church with authority, and which she declines with disaster, to exercise discipline. Many Scriptures put this in evidence. "An heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject." (Tit. 3: 10.) "Rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith." (Tit. 1: 13.) "And if any obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." (2 Thes. 3: 14.) "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you; as my Father has sent me, even so send I you. Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." (Jno. 20: 21, 22.) "Tell it to the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." (Matt. 18: 17, 18.) "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

(Matt. 16: 19.) "Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." (Rom. 16: 17.) "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly." (2 Thes. 3: 6.)

In such Scriptures, the authority with which the Church is clothed; her duty to exercise discipline; the beneficial and salutary effects; the disastrous consequences of neglect, are unmistakably set forth. "Be ye separate and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Otherwise, "I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." The interests of lost souls; the purity of Christ's house; the honor of His glorious NAME, eloquently appeal to the Church to-day, to be faithful as Smyrna and Philadelphia. "And the angel stood, saying: Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein."

THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN.

It is believed that the Reformed Presbyterian Church, more fully than any other, discharges her duty to God and men in efforts to maintain the purity of Christ's house. In doctrine, her profession is broader, more extended, more nearly commensurate with the Scriptures. Other Churches narrow the doctrinal area. With them, What is heresy ? has a much narrower definition. Hence, they have little occasion for discipline. But the Reformed Presbyterian Church recognizes that profession should be as broad as truth, and the life consistent therewith. Hence, she makes effort in this department of duty. She resists errors and sins, and disciplines those who transgress. In so doing she maintains the purity of God's house. There is no other way of keeping error out, or of holding God's people up to the standard of truth. In this, she glorifies the Redeemer, who purchased the Church with His own blood, and who is seeking to present her "faultless before the presence of His glory." The Reformed Presbyterian approximates the example of Philadelphia and Smyrna, and receives, in such measure as she is faithful, the same divine approbation. To be a member of such Church is a distinguished honor. Spiritual and eternal interests are more sacredly guarded, sheltered behind the walls and bulwarks of Mount Zion.

CHURCH UNION.

It is believed that the "Epistles to the Seven Churches" suggest the basis on which a divided church can be united. But suffer a word in a general view.

Divisions in the church of God were but little known in Old Testament times. There were a few divisions in the time of Christ, though largely, if not altogether, of those not in the invisible church. At the Reformation, divisions began to multiply. Men understood the Scriptures in different ways.

They would push their opinions and organize churches. Denominations have now so multiplied that the devout Christian is justly alarmed. What is the end to be? Are these divisions as bad as they look?

Divisions witness to corrupt doctrinal views, and to lack of sanctification. As there are degrees of civilization in nations, so the various denominations are scattered along the line of Christian development in doctrine and in life. Efforts are made to bring all together, and not on the plane of the highest. This is effort at retrogression, and, should it prevail, would be but less than a calamity. It must be admitted, however, that the trend is in this direction. Forces hitherto unknown are working not only among the latitudinarians, but among the orthodox. All creeds are thrown together in the great Christian gatherings of the day, and in which the corruptions in doctrine and in worship of the large denominations prevail. Attachment to particular truth, to denominational tenets, is reduced. Differences in belief are minimized. Points of agreement are emphasized. The maintenance of distinctive truth, under such conditions, is dangerously difficult.

Under such influences, it is not remarkable that the question of Church Union presses for solution. Those who have yielded, and those who wish they could, are alike persistent. Theoretically, they ground their desire on the greater glory to God's name in a United Church. They exalt this until there is developed a willingness to set aside other doctrines, formerly regarded as of higher importance, that it may be accomplished. The student of

Church history observes, however, that once they have put their theory into execution by going into a large and popular denomination, the passion for UNION gradually subsides. But these things show the conditions and influences under which the Church labors, and which, on the theory of Union, are seeking to have her stack her arms. What has the future in store? Disintegration? Union on the broadest possible platform? These go hand-in-hand. Or is it a call to accept the whole truth in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, as set forth in the Word?

It is believed that the "Epistles to the Seven Churches" set forth, inferentially, the principles upon which the church should, at present, proceed. On the hypothesis that these Seven Churches practically represent and illustrate the denominations of to-day, they show that the doctrinal unsoundness, the acceptance of error, and the practice of sin, were conditions under which the church labored then, as now. So corrupt were five that God not only "rebuked" them, but warned them that if they did not "repent," He would take away their "candlestick," and would "spue them out of His mouth." Surely nothing more severe could be said of the Churches to-day. Probably, however, the Head of the church would pass equally severe judgment.

Let it be supposed that the Seven Churches wish to unite. A joint meeting is called. Ephesus presents a plan on the low standard of morality and doctrine to which she had "fallen." Pergamos presents a plan which would retain the "doctrine of Balaam" and the "doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing" God " hates." Thyatira presents a plan which retains "Jezebel as a teacher to seduce the people of God to commit fornication." Sardis presents a plan in keeping with the "dead" state of that Church. Laodicea presents a plan which is to bring out the worldly side, the riches, the pomp of stately ceremonials. Philadelphia and Smyrna present a joint plan, characterized for purity of doctrine, purity of worship, and scriptural government. It covers all truth, and witnesses against all error.

It is plain to the student of Church Union that the "Seven Churches" can unite, with *God's approval*, on the basis proposed by Smyrna and Philadelphia only. Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea would, by this, be lifted out of heterodoxy and unbelief and divine disapprobation. But for Philadelphia and Smyrna to go down to their platform, would forfeit the Lord's commendation, and bring them under "censure" and "rebuke."

A basis of union upon which the seven could unite with God's approbation, will exhibit the principles upon which Union can be had with divine approval to-day. The basis is not down, but up. It is not a few fundamental doctrines, which is another way of granting shelter to error, and heterodoxy and evil practices; but the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, in all points of doctrine, worship, and purity of life as exhibited by the enlightened influence of the Holy Ghost.

A religious journal, of wide circulation, says this with reference to the united Church:

"Whether the Psalms exclusively shall be sung, or whether the spiritual creation of modern writers shall also be used; whether the congregation shall do all the singing, or a choir shall lead, or even do all the singing; whether instrumental helps may be employed, or only the human voice may be heard; whether men stand, or bow, or kneel, to pray; whether baptism be administered by sprinkling, or immersion; whether the church service is enriched by ritualism or is as plain in its character as that of the Friends—all these are matters, not of the essence of Christianity, but have to do with times, persons, places. So with creeds. Given faith in God as one's Father, Jesus as one's Saviour, the Holy Spirit as one's Sanctifier, we have the fundamentals."

It is probable that Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicean Churches will agree with this exactly. They would insist that Smyrna and Philadelphia should come in on such basis. But would they? No! Belief in the three persons of the Godhead is not sufficient. God's rebuke fell on those Churches which believed on the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The Church of Rome believes in them. If the Confession of Faith represents the development of truth, the Churches which accept and hold said Confession can unite on nothing narrower. If the Reformed Presbyterian Declaration and Testimony be accepted as the development of truth, those who so believe can unite on nothing narrower; for "the Church may not recede from a more clear and particular testimony to a more general and evasive one; but the witnesses must proceed in finishing their testimony, rendering it more pointed and complete, until God shall, according to His promise, overthrow the empire of darkness, and introduce the millennial state, in which the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." "Whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."

It is believed that the Reformed Presbyterian approximates the position held by the Church of Philadelphia in truth and duty. It is believed that she has divine approval. It is believed that she would in measure lose this divine approbation and affection of her Lord if she should recede to a lower position, to standards less full, to a life less sanctified, quite as certainly as would Philadelphia if she should have dropped back to the heterodoxy of Ephesus.

It is for Reformed Presbyterians, therefore, to lift up their heads, to rejoice in the heritage of truth and love. They should use all efforts to bring Ephesus, and Pergamos, and Thyatira, and Sardis, and Laodicea up to this standard of God's approbation; but under no circumstances should they consider the propriety of going to them. "Behold, I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

DOOR FOR WORK.

It would not be a truthful criticism of the generations gone to say, "They did nothing." "They were not workers." The good people of the past, and whose characters lose nothing by comparisons with the present, did their work in their own way, and, let it be admitted, they did it well. They were anxious about truth, to have truth believed; to have life regulated by it; to have the church a consistent witness.

In this generation there is quite more stir and agitation. Things are done in public. The platform is used. Great conventions are held. But it must be admitted that "truth" and "doctrine" do not play a conspicuous part. There is little or no anxiety as to *what men believe.* The notion seems to prevail that too much truth is a hindrance, and that by it you may keep men out of the kingdom. Hence, these great conventions reject from their programmes discussions of doctrines upon which all, in the round up, are not agreed. The changes are rung on "Work!" "Off to the harvest fields, away!" while at the same time the message is clipped, and pared, and cut down. The theory prevails that one Church has as wide an "open door" as another; and that, if there be a difference, those Churches which have the fewer doctrines and permit much worldliness, not to say sinfulness, in conduct, have the wider "door" and more effectual opportunity.

The superficial views which prevail concerning church work are justly alarming. "To save souls" seems to be the idea, as if sinners could save souls! This is the work of God. The church's work is to be a witness. She is "the pillar and ground of truth." It is her business and duty to uphold *all* truth, that men may see and hear, and to run with *all* truth into *all the world.* The regeneration of souls and uniting them to Christ is the work of God. If this view be correct, and it is, the Church with the fullest, highest, broadest, most scriptural standards has the *widest* "*open door.*"

To illustrate this declaration, the reader is again asked to open his Bible to the Epistles to the "Seven Churches which are in Asia." Let the Seven stand up and exhibit their Confessions of Faith. It is singularly advantageous to have God's judgment of these Confessions, and to know the directions He gives to these various Churches. Five of them were severely censured, warned and rebuked. What is more, and let it be particularly noted, they were commanded to *repent* and *purify their doctrine and lives.* The student will observe that this was the work assigned. They were not commanded to be off and away to the fields white for the harvest! Their work was *internal.* The reason is clear. Ephesus, "fallen" from her "first love" and "first works," and in such a degenerate state that, if she did not repent, the "candlestick would be removed," was *wholly unprepared* to receive a commission to work without. Pergamos, having them that "held the doctrine of Balaam," and the "doctrine of the Nicolaitans," "which thing I hate," could not expect a commission to carry these destructive errors to the world. Her work was *within*, and with a startling warning, she was directed to immediately remove her errors and sins.

Thyatira was suffering that "woman Jezebel to teach" and "to seduce" the servants of God "to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols." Thyatira, while in such spiritual state, could not receive from the Church's Head a commission for outside work. No! God charges her that her work is *self-purification.* Thus through the list, Smyrna and Philadelphia excepted. Each was charged with error, wickedness and sin, and, with the severest rebuke, was commanded to "repent" and to return to God. This was their first, highest and chiefest duty. *Nothing*, until this was done, *should be entered upon in the great field of opportunity.* Shall Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis and Laodicea, in all their impurity, heterodoxy and sin, be sent out to scatter broadcast their errors? No! A thousand times, No! LET THEM FIRST REPENT!! And God does not say, "Go," until they do.

Will the reader examine what God said to "the angel of the Church of Philadelphia?" It is as follows: "I know thy works; behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." Instead of directing the attention of Philadelphia to her internal state, God directs her to look without: "Behold, I have set before thee an open door. * * *" Pure, holy, God-fearing, witnessing for the whole truth, harboring none of those errors, and sins, and corrupt practices, and polluted members, which made God speak in such rebuke, she was fitted and equipped to enter the "open door" of service.

Another line of reasoning will illustrate the same general principle. Let the curriculum of doctrine and of duty be set forth by "10"—the full "open door," the full field of opportunity. As the number grows smaller, the field is narrowed. A Church with but "5" doctrines—with but half the truth, has but half the field. If with no truth—all error—there is no field whatsoever, and wherever such workers go, they but 'make men two-fold more the children of hell.' Churches with narrow standards, with short creeds, which hold a full Confession and full exhibition of truth to be unnecessary, *thereby curtail and limit their field of opportunity.* Converts on the Fiji Islands were not converted to sing the Songs of Zion. That work must yet be done by a purer Church.

But this is not all, nor the worst. The Church which exhibits "1," "3," "4," "7," "9," "10," and declines to believe "2," "5," "6," "8," will find that these last figures are not "0," but are filled with exceedingly lively errors, which are emphasized and taught. Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, not only failed to hold the truth, they held error, and error of the worst kind. A CHURCH WHICH HAS A SHORT CREED OF TRUTH WILL HAVE A LONG CREED OF ERROR. The spiritual nature will be filled, and with heterodoxy and unbelief, if orthodoxy and truth do not force them out. There is, therefore, no "open door" for a Church without truth. The "door" *opens* as you enter into truth, and comes to be an "open door and no man can shut it" when all truth is in the Declaration and Testimony, and is fearlessly proclaimed.

It is affirmed, kindly but earnestly, that not a Church, but the Reformed Presbyterian, has a full "open door, and which no man can shut." All others, because of failure to exhibit and witness for the whole truth, do, in just such measure, close the "door" against themselves.

First: The Reformed Presbyterian has an "open door" in the doctrine of Christ's mediatorial authority over the nations. This cannot be said of any other Church. Individuals, and two or three sister denominations, theoretically hold to the doctrine of Christ's kingly authority. But they do not hold to it practically, for they give their allegiance to a government which rejects Him and which makes laws contrary to His express commandment. They have no call to repentance, no message of separation, to those who are in allegiance with a government which robs God of His authority. But the Reformed Presbyterian has here an "open door" —a field in which to declare the relation which Christ sustains to the nation; the sin of this nation in rejecting Him; the duty of the nation to repent; and the duty of the Christian to "dissent" and "protest" until she does repent. Here is a grand truth and a grand field—the application of the Word to nations, and to the individual in his civic relations to a godless government. It seeks man's sanctification. It seeks to bring the nation to bow to Christ. The doctrines herein contained are second to none in importance. The very life of the nation is in them. Sister Churches practically close this "door." But the Church pure in doctrine—the Reformed Presbyterian—has here opportunity to serve the Lord. This is as distinguished an honor as it is a distinguished responsibility.

Second: The Reformed Presbyterian Church has an "open door" in purity of worship. In the work in this field she stands nearly alone. The United

Presbyterian Church has corrupted the worship of God by the introduction of instrumental music. The Presbyterian, by the introduction of instrumental music, human songs, solos, and quartettes. Thus through the list. As a result, the Churches are fast losing WORSHIP, and in place thereof, have filled the hour with entertainment, in not a few cases, semi-operatic. If there ever was a time when the Church was in danger of losing from her worship the "praise of God," now is that time. God's Songs are displaced by human compositions, and the voice is silenced even in these by the violin, the cornet, and the thunders of the organ.

It can probably be demonstrated that as worldliness and man-made ordinances enter into the worship, true religion and piety go out. Where all the features of worship are foreign to the Scriptures, there there is no piety. It becomes, therefore, a matter of most serious importance—How is God to be worshiped? "To the law and to the testimony" this question must be referred. And these speak in no uncertain language, and which can be summed up in that old, comprehensive statement, "The Second Commandment forbiddeth the worshiping of God by images, OR IN ANY OTHER WAY NOT APPOINTED IN HIS WORD."

For the worship of God as set forth in His Word; for the pure, simple worship of Apostolic times, and as returned to at the Reformation, the Reformed Presbyterian Church stands. She stands fast. She sings the Psalms, written by inspiration. These, the superficial of the present day seem incapable of appreciating, at least they appreciate the human more. Shall the church cease to praise Him, preferring to entertain herself? No! A thousand times, No! But if she be brought back to pure, Apostolic worship, hard work must be done, and now.

Here is an "open door," and which "no man can shut," for the Church which is prepared to enter it. Without intending to be invidious, it is affirmed that the Reformed Presbyterian, because of her scriptural worship, her rejection of everything man-made from the praise of God, is the Church which has this "open door." She can preach and teach the Gospel here, for she practices it. She is therefore called upon, and urged, by the glory of God and the sin of men, to labor and to pray for the purity of Christ's house, to bring back the church to the true manner of worship. God charges her with this momentous work. The corrupt in worship have closed this "door." They are chargeable with sin, and, in this field, unfitted for service. May the Church which *is* fitted enter the "door" and press the work with all energy and zeal, for the "altar of the Lord has been broken down!"

Third: The Reformed Presbyterian Church has an "open door" and "no man can shut it," in the field of anti-secret reform. There appears to be a fascination about secret societies. They are everywhere and on the increase. Their number is legion. Nearly every conceivable purpose has been utilized for increasing their number. At the entrance door is an oath, reinforced and made terrible by its bloody penalty. The candidate swears away his liberty and is henceforth, if he regards the oath binding, as did Herod who beheaded John the Baptist, restrained from divulging what goes on within. That evil deeds are buried in the darkness of the lodge is certainly believed.

The principle of secrecy, the swearing away of your liberty to stand up against wrong publicly and openly wherever found, is prominent among the anti-scriptural features of such societies. On account thereof vast multitudes of souls are being polluted, wronged and destroyed. Sadder still, the Churches harbor these societies. The ministry is in them, and, if out, the voice is hushed. The victory of Satan seems well-nigh complete. Here and there there is "the voice of one crying in the wilderness," which seems but to discover the greatness of the solitude as it echoes through the vast and desolate regions. What shall be done? "Watchman, what of the night!"

Here again, the "door" opens before the Reformed Presbyterian Church, the "door of hope" to enchained millions, and because she excludes from her membership all who identify themselves with secret, oath-bound societies. By her standards she rejects, as unscriptural, the principle of *secrecy*. She is therefore qualified to enter this field, to both preach the Gospel of truth in reference to them, and to reclaim souls from the guilt and pollution of their sin. She can sound the alarm, and break the spell of infatuation. Here is a great opportunity for work. But this "door" is closed to nearly all Evangelical Churches because they harbor said societies, and ministers, elders and people join them. These Churches have "shut" this "door," and, not only suffer by contamination, but THEY NARROW THEIR FIELD OF WORK. They are chargeable with not preaching a full Gospel, of not proclaiming liberty to the prisoner that is bound. But the Reformed Presbyterian does preach this deliverance by the blood of the cross. She stands for God and humanity. God chooses the Church pure in doctrine and in practice for this hard, unpopular, reproachful service. He commands her to enter this field "grown over with thorns and covered with nettles, and the stone wall thereof broken down," and to cultivate it, casting in the seed—the living word. The Church which approximates the Philadelphia is the one which has this "open door." The Covenanter who leaves his Church, thereby consents to a limitation of this Gospel, and also that men may remain in the slavery of this sin.

Fourth: In Mission fields the Reformed Presbyterian is the only Church which has a full "open door." Good as is the work of sister denominations, their work must be supplemented in at least the three particulars mentioned above. Their converts have not been taught the full Gospel. Missionaries must be again sent to the South Seas, to the Fiji Islands, and elsewhere, to teach that allegiance should not be given to a government which rejects the authority of Christ; that they should not swear away their liberty by joining secret, oath-bound societies; and that the Songs of Inspiration only should be used in the worship of God. These converts have not yet heard the full message. The Lord's commission is: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." This command sister Churches fulfill but in part. But the Reformed Presbyterian obeys it to the letter. She preaches a full Gospel. She has a full "open door," and needs not that any should supplement her work. It is not, therefore, remarkable that her activity in and her contributions for this important work are, in proportion to membership, in advance of any sister Church—the Moravian alone excepted. "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it."

Other doctrines might be mentioned, but these are sufficient to demonstrate that the Reformed Presbyterian Church in virtue of her profession, confession, and practice, her broad principles and their application, has an "open door" to preach the Gospel and to work for sanctification ABOVE ANY SISTER DENOMINATION! Her line of battle is as long as the Gospel. It covers doctrine, precept and commandment. It reaches every phase of life. She preaches the "good news" of deliverance from every sin, and she specifies the sin, through the blood of the cross of Christ. Members, elders, or ministers who leave her communion *narrow their field.* They declare truth to be error—a grievous sin against the Prophet Christ. They agree that souls shall remain in ignorance of their sin and pass on to the Judgment. Better remain in an unpopular Church which has the full Gospel and an "open door" into every field, than be found at last to have fought to hold men in bondage when the truth, if proclaimed, would "make them free." "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, * * * teaching them TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU."

CONCLUSION.

The Reformed Presbyterian Church is the Church of the future. From the nature of things she must live. Of necessity other denominations must come nearer, and finally accept her positions, *for they are truth.* Times of trouble may arise. Disintegration may leave only the Gideon band. But the Covenanter Church can no more die than truth. She is as immortal as doctrine itself.

She is fulfilling her grand and glorious mission. She has carried the standard far out beyond the general line of battle. "Bring back the standard to the line!" is sometimes heard from within, and always from without." "Bring the line up to the standard!" is her reply. Those who do go back will not be able here or hereafter to blot out the record divine—"Disobeyed orders!" and all through eternity they will wear a crown a little less bright, and a name a little less glorious. Those who "stand fast" and "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints," will have a life of toil, and trial, and suffering. But at its end, having battled with "principalities and powers," and "with spiritual wickedness in high places;" wounded, yet with sword uplifted in the very furnace of the conflict, will say with Paul: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God."